

SUCCESS STORY

MORRISON UTILITY SERVICES

Providing effective and efficient Safe Dig services



Delivering an innovative offshore BPO service - a UK first - demonstrating considerable scope to expand offshoring from the more traditionally undertaken F&A, HRO and Customer Service BPO contracts.

The challenge

Morrison Utility Services (MUS) is the UK's leading utility services provider. It works with blue chip utility companies across the electricity, gas, rail, telecoms and water sectors on the upgrade and maintenance of their infrastructure and networks, including electricity substations, water and gas pipes, electricity and telecoms cables and metering.

In a 10-year strategic partnership Sopra Steria is delivering key aspects of the administrative work from its offshore delivery centre in Noida.

Key points

- Provision of key underground asset information, supporting a safety focused industry
- Consistently high quality delivery targeting zero job aborts, reducing regulatory penalties
- Optimised 'take on' activities, reducing the time to deliver an effective service to 4 weeks
- Effective cross-skilling, enabling rapid deployment to meet demand peaks
- Geographically centric Utility Matrix, supports rapid identification of utility companies.

Our solution

Having risen to the initial challenge of learning new processes in a regulated market, Sopra Steria set about delivering more for less from

day one. The team explored how to cost-effectively deliver an increasing volume of transactional processing activities into a growing number of MUS customers with resource flexibility and a right-first-time approach.

Stakeholders from both Sopra Steria and MUS worked hard to agree the strategy and prioritise key service requirements, which freed up MUS management to focus on core engineering support activities. Our Noida team identified, and delivered, the primary strategic priority of providing accurate and timely documentation (Safe Dig Packs) to meet HS&E requirements, whilst reducing the associated back office costs.

How we worked together

Sopra Steria and MUS understand the value of meeting or exceeding delivery SLAs. They share goals, activities and investment, with regular service review and governance calls driving innovation ideas and jointly agreed improvements.

Together we can evidence the cost and quality benefits of successful BPO. Having witnessed Sopra Steria's performance - a measured quality of 99.9% - producing a water company's Safe Dig Packs, a leading telecoms organisation moved numerous key processes offshore, allowing MUS to take on additional client work without increasing back-office headcount.

Results and benefits

Offshore delivery has enabled MUS to expand the breadth of services it provides for a growing number of UK customers, without additional onshore headcount.

The major scope of the work is the provision of Safe Dig Packs, including the collation of drawings to show the location of any underground services, such as electricity cables, gas or water pipes, and telecoms cables/ducts. If a field operative does not have the relevant information on arrival at a work site, they cannot continue – with MUS incurring avoidable costs and potential penalties for every aborted job. Since taking over this work and introducing a one-step solution with quality reviews, Sopra Steria is now into the third year of the contract and proud that no jobs have been aborted. With MUS's operations equating to over one million streetworks excavations a year, the cost saving implications are significant.

Other benefits being delivered include:

- Quality performance at 99.9% – zero job aborts leads to near zero rework and zero penalties
- Bringing together similar activities across different contracts increases the agility and responsiveness of the offshore team
- Cross-skilling of 75% of offshore resources enables the rapid redeployment onto any account to meet peaks in demand and on-boarding of services for new customers without any time lag
- 100% achievement of turnaround time for emergency works, reducing repeat contacts
- A robust management information system and analytics support informed decision making
- Reduction in the amount of work handed off for completion to MUS reduces management bandwidth reduced from 13% to 8% for one water utility.

The quality and accuracy of documentation is an important business enabler for MUS, whose Director for Business Process Improvement Andy Carter said: "It's really great to see the packs being produced quickly with quality consistently at 100%."

Best practice and governance

Sopra Steria's formal governance approach and demonstration of best practice ensured quality standards exceeded the MUS quality benchmark. Tools and approaches that help to maintain best practice delivery, include:

- A new tailored process for onsite and offshore delivery teams to capture new requirements resulting in optimised client engagement time
- Sopra Steria's data management provides robust and evolving management reports meeting the requirement of MUS stakeholders for each respective service.

Innovation

Innovation is firmly embedded in the realisation of service and organisational improvement. The Spigit innovation platform, is used to register and vet process improvement and innovation ideas, with employees rewarded for "accepted and implemented" ideas.

High level innovations and performance improvements include:

- Utility Matrix: a one-step unique solution for creating Safe Dig Packs that provides details of the utilities and utility companies in a specific geography has reduced search times from three minutes to just 30 seconds
- Reduced contract stabilisation period from 8 weeks to 4 weeks using Sopra Steria's Efficient Operations tool to capture, manage and track productivity and priorities.

“As well as undertaking the processing at lower cost, Sopra Steria is flexible enough to accommodate the differences in our processes resulting from our client-focused approach.”

Head of Business Process Improvement, MUS

“When you consider that, no matter what we tried previously, it proved impossible to remove the backlog of jobs requiring a Safe Dig Pack to anything like an acceptable level, the performance of Sopra Steria is quite outstanding... this has been a huge success.”

UK utilities company contract manager



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